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Howell Cobb Papers

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JOHN B. LAMAR TO MRS. HOWELL COBB

Macon, Ga., June 21st, 1846.

My dear Sister:

.... My object in going to Sumpter¹ [Co.] was to buy a tract of land belonging to the estate of Paul Fitzsimmons which joins the place I recently purchased. I rode all over the crop of Mr. Butts' growing on the land he sold me. The corn was all nearly in the roasting ear & the cotton averaged over two feet high all over the plantation on the 15th June. This puts me out of conceit of cultivating poor land any more. The cotton there is now actually almost as large as a great deal of mine in Bibb & much of yours in Baldwin will get to be by frost. It looks like working for nothing to tend such land as a great deal I am cultivating. I shall try & buy some more land in Sumpter & get down there with all my hands. The land I own there is as rich as a river bittom, I never saw better land anywhere not even on Seotohatchee that Andrew brags on. I am decidedly in love with Sumpter. If Howell owned open land enough there for all his force he could make 500 bags of cotton averaging 400 pounds every year, which at 7 cents per pound would yield a cozy little sum of \$14,000, almost three times as much as his crops now bring. There is a place near mine which will be sold at administrator's sale in the course of a year or so, which if we could raise the wind to purchase, he would live like a prince afterwards. It belongs to the estate of Mr. Cowart.

¹ In Southwest Georgia, a new and rich agricultural region.

HOWELL COBB¹ TO HIS WIFE

Washington City, Jan. 14th, 1847.

My dear Wife:

Your last suggestion on the subject of your finances induces me to believe that another hundred dollars would not be unacceptable, and as I have now just about that amount on hand, I send it to you. If I had it I would send more as I feel certain that in your demands you always keep at the lowest mark that you can possibly get along with.

On the subject of sending the boys to school to Mr. Driver as he is now teaching in your neighborhood I have no doubt that it would be best to do so. I do not entertain those fears on the subject of their morals which seem to keep you from sending [them]. Not that I feel less solicitous than yourself, but from the fact that I believe that the moral character of boys is formed from the instructions and examples of those with whom they associate at home. They must come in contact with the wickedness of the world and better that their young minds should be prejudiced against it at a time when the temptations to indulge are fewer and less potent than at an advanced age when the wily [illegible] may lead them into evil practices under the plea that it is time they were learning the ways of the world. Children who have been taught at home to look upon their parents as their confidants will freely communicate every thing which comes within their knowledge or observation and thus enable the parent to instruct their mind upon the strength of their practical experience, but if kept in ignorance of the world's ways until they feel a reliance upon their own judgment they then become more disposed to indulge their passions and conceal that indulgence from the knowledge of their parents. Look at the history of those boys who have been taught by private preceptors and nine cases out of ten they have fallen upon dissipated habits of life, so soon as they have been permitted to travel beyond the roof of their father's house. This is my reasoning on the subject & of its

¹ Cobb was at this time a member of Congress; his family remained in Athens, Ga.

correctness I have no doubt. Whilst you have yet the confidence of your children send them out in the world & learn from them the impressions made upon their young minds by the scenes into which they are thrown, thereby affording you an opportunity of giving them wholesome practical advice. In this matter do as you think best and your course will certainly have my approval.

E. S. BARCLAY¹ TO HOWELL COBB

Milledgeville, Ga., Dec. 24th, 1847.

Dear Sir:

I was gratified in the reception of a letter from you today, but the suggestion it contained in reference to the selection of delegates to the Baltimore Conv. was too late, as the Party had arranged that matter previously. On the evening of the 22nd, the State House presented a singular and interesting spectacle. The Democracy in the Representative Chamber zealously maintaining the justice, propriety, and necessity of the war.² The Whigs in the Senate Chamber, denying these positions, but lauding its achievements and presenting its Hero as their candidate for the Presidency. It seemed to me a strange inconsistency to abuse the war that furnished them with materials of so much glorification, in the person of old Zac. They nominated Taylor for the Presidency and adopted resolutions to carry it out, but the particulars, I do not know. It was a long time before they could raise the wind, and would have failed altogether but for the courtesy of Crawford,³ who after he had performed all the duties of Clerk to the meeting became its Orator. He made the only speech,—tho Bartow and other bloods were there. In the absence of the committee to draft resolutions and determine on the action of the Convention Messrs. Chappell,⁴ McCallister and the Constitutionalist entertained us with a few flourishes of Rhetoric, tho I must confess that I have heard much more powerful displays, yet I suppose

¹ Member of Georgia State Senate.

² Mexican War.

³ Wm. H. Crawford, of Sumter Co., Secretary of the Senate.

⁴ Absolom H. Chappell, of Columbus, Ga., Member of Congress, 1843-1845.

it was well enough as they cheered them terribly. Chappell is no orator, McCallister is overrated—the other had just been married and therefore could not come it. Judge Cone was chairman of the committee tho the whole Democratic ground was covered, and with all the best declaration of principles to my opinion that has been presented to the people by any previous convention. We involuntarily cheered on the reading of some of the resolutions. Our delegates for the state are Chappell and McCallister. The others as far as I recollect are Cone, McDonald, H. Hull, Prior, Foreman—I don't now recollect the others—one taken from each Congressional District. After the Baltimore nomination a convention is to meet in Milledgeville to form an Electoral Ticket.

We have some two hundred and fifty bills before us, many of importance; the Tax bill not yet taken up in the Senate; the appropriation bill not sent to us yet. The old Tax law with twenty percent increase will be adopted, I expect. They tried an Ad Valorem Bill in the house but it failed, they are going to renew it in the Senate, it will fail. Tresvant claim has passed both branches,—innumerable R. R. Charters have been granted—one from Athens to Clarksville. The extension Bill has passed (W. A. R. R.), the Hiwassee company permitted to run her road to Dalton or any other point West to connect. The Womans Law passed the Senate, they will kill it in the House.¹ My conscience, what a blow up there will be with the people. A session longer by two weeks than usual and the House have raised their compensation to five dollars per day; they can't, nor won't stand it. They will hurl the Whigs out of power, unless with their usual adroitness they run the people mad after Taylor, as they did after Harrison, and so overlook their extravagant course. I don't know that there will be any necessity for the Legislature to meet again until Berrien's term is out, as the whole country now is incorporated, and can make their own laws. We have about 500 imperiums in one imperio. I have been in error all my life, and now fear state usurpation & tyranny, much

¹ A Bill for the protection and preservation of the rights and property of married women.

more than Federal. A dust is kicked up about Federal power and with the view of blinding the people's eyes, that the concentrated wealth may riot on the hard earnings of poverty. I dread nothing from consolidation, I would rather serve one master than bear the name of freeman and be a slave to thousands. "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and soberness."

Some of my friends have told me they would write to our members in reference to William. I hope his application will be successful. I am assured you will use your exertions. You will excuse this scroll. In great haste.

HOWELL COBB TO HOPKINS HOLSEY¹ AND OTHERS,
COMMITTEE.

Washington City, June 27, 1848.

Within my recollection, there has been no Presidential election involving so many and such important issues as the present. The Whig party of the Union, in proposing to take the administration of the government into their hands, virtually present all the issues which they have sought to engraft upon the legislation of the country, during the long period in which their efforts have been attended with discomfiture and defeat. There is no better rule by which to anticipate what may be their future course, than to examine and ascertain what has been their past conduct under similar circumstances. In the political canvass of 1840 many and solemn were the assurances offered to the people in the various sections of the country, that the triumph of the Whig party would be unattended with any effort to renew the charter of the United States Bank, to revive the oppressive system of a protective tariff, etc., etc., and yet no sooner was that party elevated to power by a too generous and confiding people, than all the appliances of party machinery were brought to bear upon the refractory spirits, who manifested, for a short period, a disposition to act in good faith upon their numerous and soon to be forgotten professions,

¹ Editor of "The Southern Banner," Athens, Ga.

made to the people pending the election; and with what effect these appliances were used, may be learned by reference to the records of that memorable Congress of '41 and '42, upon the pages of which you will find the two vetoed bank charters, in close company with the bankrupt law and tariff act of '42, enduring monuments of the honesty and sincerity with which those pretended representatives of the people had carried out their many solemn pledges of reform, retrenchment, and relief, which they had so freely made during the canvass, and then so shamefully violated.

If the rule I have laid down, to ascertain the probable effect of Whig supremacy be a correct one, let the people ponder well upon the legislation to which I have just referred, before they again allow the government to pass into the hands of those who have heretofore availed themselves of their temporary elevation to power, to fasten upon them the most odious and oppressive acts that have ever disgraced our statute books. But if I judge them too harshly, they have it in their power to relieve themselves from the imputation which the inferences I have drawn cast upon them by a frank, open and honest profession of their principles; and until such avowal is made, they must not complain if we judge them by the record of their own making.

The name of Gen. Taylor whom they present as their candidate for the Presidency, affords no protection to the people against a repetition of the legislation of '41 and '42, so long as he adheres to that inflexible rule he has prescribed for himself, to make no disclosure to the public, of the political principles which he holds, or the public measures he will recommend, whilst the name of Mr. Millard Fillmore stands associated with those offensive measures, in the intimate relationship of friend and father.

Apart from these important questions of national policy, there is involved in the present election another issue, vitally affecting the interests of the people of Georgia, and the South generally. The question of domestic slavery, which has so long been the subject of discussion upon mere speculative theories, has at length assumed a practical shape,

upon which the public men of the country are required to act promptly and decisively. The termination of the war with Mexico has left our country in the possession of a large and extensive territory which is soon to be peopled with her energetic and enterprising sons, and the question is presented, whether the people of the south shall be permitted to participate with their brethren of the north in the benefits and advantages of the new acquisition, purchased by their joint blood and treasure.

A strong and numerous party of the north, including the whole of the whig and abolition parties, and an inconsiderable portion of the democratic party, has declared their solemn and unalterable determination to exclude from this territory all of the people of the South, who may desire to remove there with their slave property, under the false and delusive cry of "free territory." They are seeking to strike at our peculiar institutions a deadly blow, and it behooves our people, in such a crisis, to guard with a jealous eye, against any effort to impose upon their credulity or to take advantage of their too generous and confiding nature. The equivocal position assigned to Gen. Taylor on this important question, by his party friends, commands our serious and earnest consideration. His friends at the South point to his location in our midst, and the fact of his being a slaveholder, and tell us that in his hands our rights will be guarded, and our interests protected, and that in the event of his election, no bill involving the principles of the "Wilmot Proviso" would receive his Executive sanction, whilst his Northern supporters, with equal earnestness, and upon more explicit assurances, say to their constituents, that "His (General Taylor's) declared sentiments are a guaranty that he will never in the slightest manner, interfere with the action of Congress, when it shall forbid the existence of slavery in our newly acquired territory. Let the representatives of the people and of the states be left free to act upon that question, uncontrolled by executive influence and executive veto. and we are safe." No candid man will deny that the representations of Gen. Taylor's position on this subject at the

North and the South, are directly in conflict with each other, and that an attempt is being made to practice a fraud and deception upon the one or the other section of the Union. Gen. Taylor owes it to himself as well as to his country and her institutions, to put an end to this system of double dealing, by an open and candid avowal of his true position, and should he persist in his refusal to do so, he will shew himself utterly unworthy of our esteem and respect, much more of our confidence and support.

The association of the name of Mr. Fillmore on the same ticket with Gen. Taylor, is well calculated to increase rather than diminish the distrust already created in the public mind by his present equivocal position. When we refer to the journals of Congress and find the name of Mr. Fillmore, with unvarying uniformity associated with the names of Messrs. John Q. Adams, Giddings, Slade, etc., on every vote involving the question of slavery, it is not to be wondered at that we should indulge in the most serious apprehensions of the effect likely to be produced by the elevation of these men to the highest offices of the Republic.

The safety of the South consists not in the men who are to fill the offices of the President and Vice-President, but it is in knowing what these men will do in the event of their election. It is therefore not only our policy, but our duty, and our right to be informed clearly, distinctly and unequivocally of the views and principles of candidates for public office, before we rashly bestow our suffrages upon them.

The democratic party, in presenting to the people the names of Gen. Cass and Gen. Butler, as their candidates for these high and responsible offices, have the proud distinction of knowing, that upon all these great and important questions to which I have referred, they have no cause to practice concealment or deception. They not only present to the country, the names of men distinguished for their eminent services, as well in the field as in the cabinet, but at the same time, with frankness and candor, they submit to the intelligent judgment of the country, their principles and opinions, and challenge for them the closest scrutiny and investiga-

tion. If the public mind sanctions and approves these principles—if the people are satisfied that their interest, happiness and prosperity will be promoted and advanced by having this government honestly and faithfully administered upon these well established principles of our democratic faith, then, we ask for the nominees of our party, that hearty and cordial support, which patriotism and interest alike demand and require. This is the fair, open, and manly course. Truth needs no concealment. Honesty wears no disguise.

Upon the subject of our peculiar institutions, Gen. Cass has placed before the whole country his views. They are such as have commanded the approval of the great body of our people. To him, more than to any one else, or perhaps to all others, are we indebted for the very great change produced in the public mind at the North, on the subject of the Wilmot Proviso, which at one time threatened to sweep everything before it. We should now avail ourselves of the present opportunity to manifest, by a warm, cordial, and enthusiastic support of his claims to the Presidency, our appreciation of his patriotic devotion to our just interests and constitutional rights. Let not our Northern friends, who are true to us on this question, be stricken down by our own suicidal hands.

The limits of this communication will not permit a discussion of the various interesting questions, growing out [of] and connected with, the subjects, to which I have incidentally referred. I trust that the adjournment of Congress at no very distant day, will enable me to visit the people of our district, at which time I propose to discuss, fully and frankly, these important subjects, and all others that may be brought into the contest, and until such time, I must postpone all further consideration of them.

I cannot close this letter, gentlemen, without expressing to you my thanks for the very flattering manner in which you have been pleased to communicate the decision of the Convention, and I beg that you will accept the assurance of my sincere regard and esteem.

HOWELL COBB TO HIS WIFE

Washington, D. C., Feb. 8, 1849.

My dear Wife:

I had almost come to the conclusion that you had determined to close our correspondence and was seriously contemplating the propriety of going to California at the end of the present session, raising the free soil banner and trying my fortunes on another theatre, but your letter just received relieves my fears and encourages me to hope that I may yet resuscitate my sinking fortunes in Georgia and at some future day receive the mead due to an honest & conscientious public servant. At least you are not against me and with your cooperation we may yet look upon brighter skies. As I am now forewarned that you will not be able to write during your trip to Sumpter, I shall be able to remain quiet under the disappointment, & not subject your silence to misconstruction.

I was much gratified to learn that your trip was passing off so agreeably and when your little crowd are entirely relieved of their colds, I have no doubt you will not only be pleasantly situated but I promise myself the gratification of seeing your health much improved.

Washington as it always the case is the scene of much excitement and the most agitating question of the day is still the subject of slavery. I am of opinion that the question will be settled at the present session on the basis of [the] Douglas bill,¹ and I would entertain no doubt of it, but for the violent opposition it has encountered from John C. Calhoun. It does not suit his purposes to get clear of it upon any reasonable terms. It constitutes his last hope of organizing a Southern party of which he shall be head & soul. God grant that we may be able to floor the old reprobate & thereby preserve the honor of the South, and secure the permanency of the Union. If it would please our Heavenly Father to take Calhoun & Benton home I should look upon it as a national blessing.

¹ Introduced by Senator S. A. Douglas, Dec. 11, 1848. It contemplated organizing the whole of the Mexican cession into one state, to be called California. The bill was later amended by Douglas so as to provide for two states, California and New Mexico, with nothing said about slavery.

HOWELL COBB, LINN BOYD,¹ BEVERLY L. CLARKE,²
AND JOHN H. LUMPKIN,³ TO THEIR
CONSTITUENTS

Washington City, February 26, 1849.

We address you this circular from a sense of duty to ourselves. A portion of the Southern Representatives in Congress, have recently issued an Address⁴ to the people of the South on the exciting question of slavery. We were unable to unite with them in the movement, and the absence of our names from the paper which they have published, has given rise to strictures upon our course which we propose now to notice. Our conduct has been misconstrued by some and misunderstood by others, and to place the matter in its proper light is the object of the present communication. A proper appreciation of our motives and feelings, requires a partial consideration of the Address as it stood, when it first issued from the hands of its author. The modifications which were subsequently made, improved its tone, temper, and spirit, though they failed to render it wholly unobjectionable. Some of the passages stricken out can meet with no justification from that portion of its signers who belong to the Democratic party, and without stopping to comment upon all of them we cannot pass by in silence the remarkable attack made upon Mr. Polk and those Democrats who had supported the Oregon bill. The Address in this particular was marked with a spirit of opposition to the present Executive, which was well calculated to array the people of the South against an administration, which has with signal fidelity carried into the practical operation of the Government, all the cardinal principles of our political faith. The insertion of this paragraph in the original address, was not more remarkable than its failure to make the slightest discrimination in its charges upon the North,

¹ Congressman from Kentucky, 1835-1837; 1839-1855; Speaker of the 32nd and 33rd Congresses.

² Congressman from Kentucky, 1847-1849.

³ Congressman from Georgia, 1843-1849; 1855-1857.

⁴ Calhoun's "Southern Address" (See Works, VI. pp. 290-313), in which he plead for the organization of a distinctly Southern party to resist aggressions on the slavery interests.

in favor of those who have ever manifested a determination to stand by the constitutional rights of the South, even at the price of self-sacrifice. It seemed to us to foreshadow a result in the organization of a sectional party, which would neither promote the interests or strengthen the securities of the South.

The Address was still more objectionable for what it did not contain. It professed to give a faithful history of the abolition question, with the causes of its increase, and the purposes it has sought to accomplish, and was intended to place before the people of the South the true condition of the feelings and sentiments of the Northern people in regard to it. Its object in this respect was to give the Southern people such information as would enable them to adopt such a policy as would best guard and maintain their rights. The purpose was a good one, but it was not an original one. The same object has been pursued with equal earnestness for many years, by those who are as deeply interested in the preservation of our peculiar institutions as Mr. Calhoun, and it remains to be seen whether the efforts of the one or the other are best calculated to effect the object which both profess to have in view. The history of the abolition question as presented by Mr. Calhoun is incomplete and unsatisfactory. There are important matters wholly omitted in his Address, which are as necessary to be known to a correct understanding of the question, as those which he has presented, and without a knowledge and appreciation of which, the people of the South will be incapable of forming a proper judgment on the subject, or adopting the proper line of policy. Abolition is not only a question of religious fanaticism, but one of political power. It has entered more or less, for many years, into the party politics of the country, and has constituted an element in the organization of parties at the North, of no inconsiderable importance. It is in this view of the subject that the Address is marked with a silence which in our judgment admits of no justification. If we contemplate the continuance of the Union, as the Address professes to do, it is a matter of serious interest to the Southern people to know the terms of relationship which

have heretofore and do now exist between these fanatical assailants of our peculiar institutions and the political parties of the country, with the one or the other of which our people are associated in the bonds of political faith. With this information in our possession, we would know whom to regard as friends and who as enemies. In the hour of danger and trial we are enabled to form our political associations in reference to the protection of our dearest interest. Why, then, should we fail to tell the people the truth upon this subject? Was it because it would bear heavily upon the one party and elevate in the estimation of Southern men, the character of the other? It will not do to say, that it thereby introduced party politics into the Address. Upon a question so important and momentous as the Address regards the present state of the slavery agitation, it becomes Southern men to forego the ties of party obligation, and to respond fearlessly and honestly to the demands of truth and justice. It was indeed a strange demand upon the liberality of Southern Democrats to ask them to withhold the truth from the people, because its declaration would offend the sensibilities of their Southern Whig friends. If the Southern Whigs are not yet prepared to abide the judgment which the public record pronounces upon their Northern associates, we seriously fear that they are beyond the point where their minds can be reached by any argument, however ably and forcefully addressed to them even by the distinguished author of the Southern Address.

Without attempting an analysis of the Congressional Record upon the slavery question, we will submit a few general propositions which will put this matter in its proper light. The general proposition may be fearlessly stated, and the records of Congress with safety appealed to for the evidence of its truth, that upon all questions involving the rights of the South, in connection with the institution of slavery upon which an issue has been made, our only friends at the North have been found in the ranks of the Northern Democracy. Without stopping now to discuss the merits of these issues, which surely cannot be necessary before a

Southern constituency, let us recur to some of them in illustration of the proposition just laid down. Among the most prominent of these issues, and one which perhaps excited as much if not more of the public attention than any other, was the famous 21st. rule of the House of Representatives, which peremptorily excluded all petitions on the subject of the abolition of slavery either in the States, Territories, or District of Columbia. That rule was originally introduced into Congress by a Southern Whig, (Mr. Johnson, of Maryland). It was the subject of repeated discussion and numerous votes, from the time of its original adoption to the period of its repeal in the 28th. Congress. During that whole time it never received the vote of a single Northern Whig. It was adopted and kept in existence by the united vote of all the Southern members, (with one or two exceptions,) and a portion of the Northern Democracy.

On the question of the annexation of Texas, which was opposed at the North on account of her slavery institutions, a similar state of things will be found to exist. That measure was carried by the aid of Northern Democratic votes alone, men whose minds were not like their Whig brethren, so surcharged with bitter hatred of the South and her institutions, as to defeat this favorite object of Southern men, on account of the existence there of our peculiar institutions.

An equally forcible and convincing illustration will be found in the history of the present exciting issue which now so seriously threatens the peace and harmony of our Union, if not its very existence. Various votes have been taken both in the Senate and House of Representatives, during the last three sessions, on the Wilmot Proviso, and it yet remains for the first Northern Whig to record his vote against it. It has at different times been defeated in both branches of Congress, and in every instance by the aid of Northern Democratic votes. The action of Congress on this subject, in connection with the famous Compromise bill introduced into the Senate by Mr. Clayton, of Delaware, presents a striking illustration of the correctness of our position. That bill was the work of time and deliberation. It sought to place the adjustment of this disturbing question upon such

grounds as would enable the moderate and just men of all sections of the country to give it their support, without requiring the sacrifice of any cardinal principle upon the part of anyone. Indeed, some Southern men refused it their support because of its inefficiency in properly guarding and protecting the rights of the South. Yet inefficient and powerless as those Southern Whigs who aided in its defeat regarded it, it guaranteed more to the South than any of their Northern allies was willing to grant. The bill encountered the undivided opposition of the Northern Whig party with the isolated exception of Mr. Phelps, of Vermont; and he took especial care to put his acquiescence in its passage upon the ground, that it was a virtual enforcement of the principles of the Wilmot Proviso. These prominent instances have been selected for the purpose of bringing clearly and distinctly before the public mind of the South the relationship which the two parties at the North have borne to this subject. They might be multiplied to the satisfaction of the most incredulous mind, if additional force could thereby be given to the argument. But if these facts, which are in harmonious unison with the whole record of Congress on this subject, do not carry home conviction to the mind of a Southern man, such an one would not believe though one should rise from the dead.

If we may rely with any certainty upon the reports of the public press, of the proceedings of the State Legislatures, or the representation of individual acquaintances who are supposed to be familiar with the matter, we may gather confirmatory evidence of the same fact from that quarter. We are yet to learn the name, or hear of the existence of the first Whig who has ever voted in any of the Legislatures of the free States against resolutions in favor of the principles of the Wilmot Proviso. The same is true of their public press. Indeed, in the ranks of the Northern Whig party, there has been and now is an unvarying uniformity of sentiment on this subject, which compels every candid and truthful loving man to admit, that the South will look in vain in the ranks of that party for a single friend upon

whose arm she may lean in the hour of her trials and troubles. They have for years been courting and caressing the abolitionists, and in their public career have manifested subservience to abolition dictation, and an affiliation with abolition sentiment, which has in no small degree contributed to increase the excitement and magnify the importance of this most wicked and reckless warfare upon Southern rights. These solemn truths have been from time to time presented to the consideration of the Southern people; and they have been urged to cut loose from a political association, which was sowing broadcast through the land the seeds of their ruin and destruction. As individuals who had participated in presenting these facts to the people, we had been actuated by the sincerest desire to save our country from the ruinous consequences, which we believe must inevitably follow from an union of the South with Northern Whigs. We were candid and honest in the declaration which we made to the people from time to time, of the ruinous effects of such an alliance. Our opinions have undergone no change. We yet believe, that the only true and reliable friends of the South at the North are to be found in the Democratic party and that the protection of our rights so far as the same is dependent upon the legislation of Congress is only to be promoted by uniting in still closer bonds with those who have given us these evidences of the sincerity of their friendship, and the honesty of their purposes, and at the same time severing all connection with those whose whole course has been characterized with unchanging proofs of hostility and opposition. Entertaining these views, we should have been false to our past professions—false to our present convictions—false to the dictates of policy—false to the requirements of justice—false to the impulses of gratitude, if we had given our sanction to a paper purporting to give a faithful narrative of the abolition question, and which omitted wholly to consider this, the most imposing and important feature of the subject. The sacrifices which the Northern Democracy have made in their efforts to sustain the constitutional rights of the South against the combined

influence of the Northern Whigs and Abolitionists, have not yet entirely passed from our memories. Some of the instances are within our personal knowledge. We have seen them stricken down in the struggle—we have heard around us the shouts of rejoicing over their defeat from the very men in defence of whose rights their last blow in the contest was stricken—we have seen their seats in the Halls of Congress vacated one by one, to be filled with the miserable panderers to abolition excitement, who are recognized and hailed as good men and true in the great family of national Whigs—we have seen the craven hearted Democrat, who, as he humbly bowed his neck to receive the abolition yoke, spurned with indignation from the embraces of his former political associates, only to be the more cordially welcomed into the ranks of the Northern Whigs, and by them elevated from the House to the Senate of the United States. Until these things shall have been obliterated from our memories, we can never affix our signatures to any paper professing to be a faithful history of the question which does not deign to bestow upon them even a passing notice.

Some may be disposed to reply to these considerations, that the number of our reliable friends among the Northern Democrats is daily diminishing. They may refer to the fact, that on the more recent votes which have been taken in Congress on the subject, we have been enabled to obtain the cooperation of comparatively a small number, and in this result find a justification for a refusal to recognize the obligations imposed upon us by their past services. If the grateful remembrance of past kindness and friendship does not suggest a sufficient answer to such objections, we might perhaps with more effect reach their judgments with the considerations of policy. The Southern Whigs have, by their unfortunate alliance with their Northern associates, done more to estrange our only friends at the North than all other causes combined; and if to their ungrateful and ungenerous reproaches of the sincerity of Northern Democrats we are to render our acquiescence by our silence on such an occasion as this, we may reasonably look to the period as not

far distant, when the South will be called upon to mourn over the departure from the Halls of our National Legislature of her last Northern friend.

The Southern Address also purports to give the causes of the increase of the abolition excitement at the North; but wholly fails to account for the remarkable fact, that during the present session of Congress some of the most alarming votes have been given which can be found on the records of our national legislation; whilst it directs the attention of the Southern people to the fact, that the movements of the agitators at the present session have been directed, with peculiar interest to the subject of slavery in the District of Columbia, it attempts no explanation of the causes which have led to this remarkable and threatening demonstration. The narrative, to be complete and truthful, should not have omitted so important a consideration, if there existed any reasons that could with propriety have been assigned. It may be, that the author was again apprehensive of wounding the feelings of sensitive Southern Whigs; but we cannot see in this any sufficient palliation for this omission. We all must know and feel that the unfortunate vote cast at the late presidential election by a majority of the Southern people, for Millard Fillmore for the Vice Presidency, has had no inconsiderable agency in producing this state of things. Fillmore stood pledged before the country in favor of "immediate legislation by Congress for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia." By his silence he refused any modification of this or other equally odious opinions, which he had promulgated more than ten years ago, in the efforts (so common with his party) of drawing into his support the abolition influence of his district. With these most infamous abolition sentiments hanging upon his lips, he was triumphantly elevated, by the votes of the South, to the second office in the Republic. This vote, thus cast by the South in an evil hour, has been construed by these Northern fanatics into a willingness on her part to submit to the practical operation of the principles so boldly avowed by her favorite candidate; and they have

been emboldened by this result to renew with redoubled zeal the warfare upon our rights generally; and particularly have their efforts been directed to the District of Columbia, on account of the well known views of Millard Fillmore on that point. Southern members have been taunted on the floor of Congress with this criticism upon the recent election; and however well satisfied we may be of the fact, that our people never intended by their votes to endorse the odious sentiments of the man for whom they voted, yet it is no easy matter to give a satisfactory solution of this most unfortunate vote, without compromising, to some extent, the intelligence of those who were induced to give it. Be this as it may, we can entertain no doubt of the general proposition, that a new impetus has been given to the abolition excitement, and a new energy imparted to its advocates by the consideration to which we have just alluded. To come to a different conclusion, we should be compelled to close our eyes to the scenes which have for the last two months been transpiring around us. With this conviction resting on our minds, we should have forfeited our own self-respect, and the confidence of our friends, to have sent forth to the people, as a faithful account of this question, a paper which, upon this important view of it, was silent as the grave.

The inquiry now presents itself, are these facts well authenticated, and is the argument which we have drawn from them proper and legitimate? If so, it remains to be considered, why they were excluded from the Address? Upon the first point it is hardly necessary to enlarge before a Democratic constituency. Upon repeated occasions we have presented them to the consideration of the Southern people, and whilst the Democratic portion of our hearers have, by unmistakable evidences, manifested their concurrence and approbation, we have not yet met with the first Whig who has been able, truthfully, to deny the facts, or successfully to controvert the argument. To the files of the same Democratic press that is now sounding the premonitory notes of a condemnation of our course, we could, with safety, appeal

for the evidence of the correctness of our positions, if we believed that the occasion required it.

To the second inquiry which we have presented, we have yet to hear any satisfactory reason that can be given, for denying, to the facts which we have detailed their legitimate place in an Address which purported to give a faithful history of the abolition question. The fear of giving offense to Southern Whigs, and thereby losing their aid and cooperation, will hardly afford a justification in the minds of those who accord their assent to the correctness of our statements, and whose judgments sanction the soundness of our argument. Under circumstances the most flattering of success, such a policy would tax the strongest intellects for reasons to palliate and justify it, but in the present instance, the object was an idle and visionary one, as the result very clearly demonstrated. The Whigs had just succeeded in elevating to the highest offices in the Government, men, in whose integrity of purpose, and fidelity to the Constitution, they had expressed their unbounded confidence, and it was an unreasonable anticipation to suppose that they would participate in any movement, which rested for its propriety and necessity, mainly upon the apprehension that the rights of the South were unsafe in the hands of those whom they had selected as faithful guardians of the constitutional rights of every portion of the Union. This error on the part of the Southern Whigs was not more deep and fatal than was the hope of their sudden conversion, wild and visionary. As might have been reasonably expected, they refused, en masse, with two exceptions, to give their sanction to the movement and gave early indications to the meeting, of their intention to withhold their signatures from the Address. With this determination, on their part, ended the prospect of making this a Southern movement, irrespective of party considerations. At this period we considered that the time had arrived when the friends of the Address must determine between two policies, the one looking to the preservation of the Democratic party of the Union, and the other contemplating the organization of a sectional party,

which being composed, almost exclusively, of Democrats, would supplant entirely, the present Democratic party of the South, and utterly destroy our national organization. To our minds, it left the friends of the Address without any reasonable pretext for excluding from it the matter, which it seemed to us, was indispensable to a just, full, and fair consideration of the subject. Those who agreed with us, urged upon the peculiar friends of the Address, the propriety and necessity of giving it this direction, but we found that the proposition met with so little favor, that if submitted to the meeting it would not only be attended with defeat, but would subject its friends to the imputation of wantonly urging a disturbing element upon their proceedings, thus leaving us no other alternative than, either to withhold our signatures, or to abandon the course which we felt was clearly indicated by a sense of truth and justice. There was no difficulty in moulding this Address into any shape, consistent with truth, which would give to the movement additional strength in the South, and every facility was afforded of relieving the scruples and quieting the apprehensions of Southern men, whose alliance was sought to be obtained, but when a suggestion is made which looks beyond the limits of our own immediate section, and seeks to do an act of sheer justice to Northern Democrats, who have stood firmly by our sides in the darkest hour of our trial, and which regards with favor, the continued preservation of the Democratic party of the Union—it is regarded as narrow and contracted and indignantly spurned, as unworthy of serious consideration. No one appreciated more fully than ourselves the necessity for unanimity in our action to effect any decisive good, and though we may be held responsible in part for the failure to obtain that result, we do not feel that upon our shoulders should that responsibility be placed, nor upon those who sympathised with us in the views we entertained. Some of the peculiar friends of the Address manifested an opposition to any material amendment of it, as determined and uncompromising as was our support of our own firm and decided convictions. They were fixed and resolute in their purpose, to have the Address sub-

stantially as it was finally presented to the public, or not to have it at all. Some of them declaring that they could not so far yield their wishes as to acquiesce in Mr. Berrien's substitute, though it should be adopted by a majority of the meeting. The only construction which our minds could place upon this course of conduct, led us to the conclusion that the principal effect which was to result from the movement, would be the organization of a Southern sectional party. In such a party organization we could see no additional security to Southern rights. It possessed no claims to lure us from the old association which we had formed in the days of our earliest political recollection with the Democratic party of the Union. We preferred yet to rely upon the combined influence of the Southern and Northern Democrats for the protection of the rights of the South, so long as the same were dependent upon the legislation of our national Government. We could not see how our strength was to be increased by diminishing our numbers. If Southern Democrats alone could, by party organization, throw ample barriers around the peculiar interests of the South, we were at a loss to understand how the aid and cooperation of our Northern friends would embarrass our movements or weaken our defences. So long as we contemplate the continuance of the Union, so long will we look to the preservation of the integrity of the Democratic party of the Union, as an element of our greatest strength and security. When the time shall come, if ever, which God, in his mercy avert, when the rights and interests of the South, under the Constitution, are spurned and disregarded, and we shall cease to be considered as equals with our Northern brethren, we shall look to other and higher measures to redress than those which promise to flow from the organization of a Southern sectional party.

We have now frankly and honestly stated the reasons which impelled us to the course which we have felt [to] be our duty to pursue, and they are submitted to those who have a right to pass upon them for their calm and deliberate consideration. Our object has been to defend ourselves,

and not to assail others; and it is due to many of those who have sanctioned and signed the Address, that we should disclaim any intention to attribute to them the motive of producing the result which we believe would inevitably follow the success of the movement. Their judgment has placed a different construction upon the whole matter from ours, and in this honest difference of opinion is to be found the reasons which have induced the difference in our action on the subject. Time must determine between us, and to the award which future developments shall render we will cheerfully submit.

Up to the present late period of the session we have indulged the hope that this truly vexed and harrassing question would be settled, upon terms just and honorable to all portions of the Union. In the proposition which sought to settle it by the admission of our new Territories into the Union as States, we recognized a basis of adjustment which rested upon a principle so just and sacred, as we hoped would disarm all opposition, and commend itself to the favor of the most fastidious and violent on the one or the other side of the question. It looked to the will of the people, upon whom the laws were to operate, as the best indication of what those laws should be. In the organization of their State governments, our fellow-citizens of California and New Mexico, would exercise that great American privilege of determining for themselves the nature and character of their local institutions; and whatever that decision might be, surely no one who draws upon the spirit of our revolutionary struggles for the chart of their political faith, would complain of a result which flowed naturally from the exercise of the great and glorious principles of self-government. Whether this hope is destined to a realization or disappointment remains yet to be seen, though its prospect becomes more and more unpromising, as each successive day brings us nearer to the close of a session, whose sands are nearly run out. If the measure should be passed, it will be like oil poured upon the troubled waters, peace and harmony and good feeling will again be restored to our country. If it is

lost, the responsibility of its defeat, with its consequences, must rest upon those who produce the result. In any event, such is our confidence in the honesty and intelligence of the American people, that we entertain the strongest hopes that its final adjustment will be marked with a spirit of liberality and justice, worthy of the age in which we live, and the institutions under which we have been reared. The sincere attachment felt by the people of all sections to this Union of our fathers, cemented as it was by their blood, and consecrated by their wisdom, forbid the idea that its existence and perpetuity will be wantonly endangered by an act of gross and palpable injustice upon any portion of the confederacy. This Union is the rock upon which the God of nations has built his political church, and we have been summoned to minister at its holy altars, let us not prove unworthy of the high mission to which we have been called.